

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5981

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEHRAN 2616

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IR, LE, US

SUBJ: IRANIAN-U.S. RELATIONS: POTENTIAL PROBLEM

1. IRANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMED US THAT AMERICAN EMBASSY BEIRUT HAS OFFERED LEADER GRANT TO IMAM MUSA AS-SADR, RELIGIOUS LEADER OF THE SHI'A MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN LEBANON.

2. IRANIANS STATE THAT MUSA AS-SADR, A FORMER IRANIAN NATIONAL WHO HAS HAD IRANIAN NATIONALITY REVOKED AND IS A NATURALIZED LEBANESE CITIZEN, HAS BEEN A VIRULENT CRITIC AND OPPONENT OF THE SHAH'S GOVERNMENT. IN RECENT MONTHS HE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE PROPAGANDIST WHO HAS CHARGED IRAN WITH IMPERIALIST AGGRESSION AGAINST ARAB NEIGHBORS IN THE GULF AND IN OMAN.

3. ACCORDING TO THE IRANIANS, AS-SADR WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE LATE TIMUR BAKHTIAR, THE ONE-TIME CHIEF OF IRANIAN INTELLIGENCE (SAVAK) WHO BECAME THE EXPATRIATE LEADER OF A DISSIDENT MOVEMENT AGAINST THE SHAH. HE HELPED KEEP BAKHTIAR FROM BEING EXTRADITED FROM LEBANON TO IRAN WITH A RESULTANT BREAK IN IRANIAN-LEBANESE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

4. IRANIANS CLAIM SADR HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE IRAQIS AND HAS HAD CONTACTS WITH LIBYA'S QADHAFI. HIS PROPAGANDA LINE AGAINST IRAN PARALLELS THAT OF THE CLANDESTINE TUDEH PARTY RADIO PEYK-E-IRAN.

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5. THIS EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO JUDGE THE KIND OF INTERNAL

POLITICAL EQUITIES OUR BEIRUT EMBASSY MAY HAVE BEEN BALANCING
IN OFFERING A LEADER GRANT TO SADR. WE WISH, HOWEVER, TO
ALERT THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY THAT PROVISION OF AN
AMERICAN LEADER GRANT TO SADR WILL BE TAKEN VERY BADLY BY
THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT AND IS BOUND TO HAVE UNFAVORABLE
REPERCUSSIONS.
HELMS

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NNN

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